

From: jkey@elm.ssec.wisc.edu@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 1:38pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To Whom it May Concern:

I would like to express my concern over the proposed settlement in the U.S. Department of Justice vs. Microsoft case. I use both open source and proprietary software, Linux being my primary operating system for work and Microsoft Windows being the choice for our family's home computers. I was brought up with both Unix and Microsoft operating systems, so I feel that I can speak objectively, at least from a technical perspective.

My reactions and recommendations are in response to the fact that Microsoft was found by the legal system to have broken the law. It grew to and maintained a monopoly by illegal means, so actions must be taken to restore a competitive environment.

I have two recommendations:

1. Force Microsoft to document their proprietary file formats.
This is probably the single most effective way to restore competition. Microsoft has a stranglehold on the word processing (MS Word) and presentation (MS Powerpoint) markets, not because its products are superior but because of illegal practices. The need to read and write files in those formats is now critical for the exchange of information. If other software companies could effectively and completely import and export Word and Powerpoint files, competition would be restored.
2. Do not allow Microsoft to give software and hardware to schools as their "punishment". This proposal is a gift to them, not to the country! It is anything but punishment. Imagine all the schools that will be locked into future upgrades of Microsoft products, and the way our youth will be conditioned to working the Microsoft way. If Microsoft truly wants to help our educational system, have them donate the money, not the software or hardware, with no strings attached.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

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